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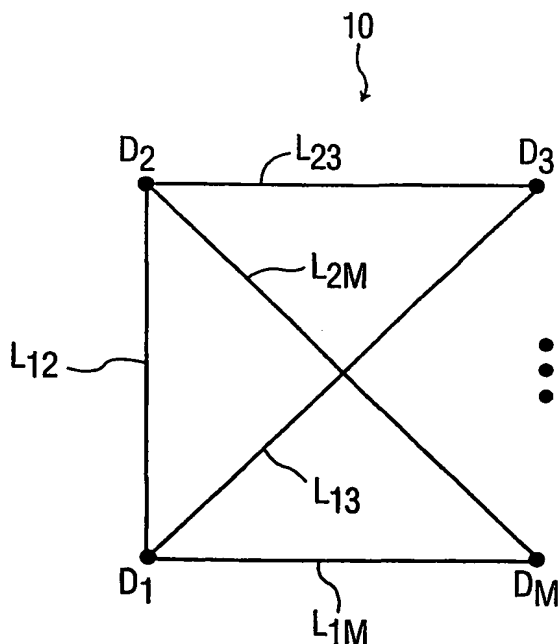
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(54) Title: **METHOD FOR LIMITING THE NUMBER OF NETWORK DEVICES IN A COMMUNICATION NETWORK**



(57) **Abstract:** A network of M devices such that M³1 and methods for devices to join and leave the network. Each device of the network has a real or virtual token counter that stores a token count of not less than zero. An equation $M + S = K$ must be satisfied. S denotes the number of tokens in the network and is numerically equal to a summation of the token counts over the M devices. K is a characteristic integer constant of the network having a value of at least 2 and is established upon creation of the network. Each device has a controller for connecting and communicating with at least one other device when $M > 1$. The network has network rules, comprising a joining rule for effectuating a non-network device joining the network and a leaving rule for effectuating a network device leaving the network.



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